DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 035 905 CG 004 876

AUTHOR RICH, JOHN; LUCKEY, ELEANORE BRAUN
TITLE THE USE AND PRODUCTION OF TELEVISION TAPES FOR COURSES IN FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION.
INSTITUTION CONNECTICUT UNIV., STORRS.
PUB DATE 69
NOTE 16P.; PAPER PRESENTED AT THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON FAMILY RELATIONS, WASHINGTON, D.C., OCTOBER 23--24, 1969

EDRS PRICE EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.90
DESCRIPTORS AUDIOVISUAL AIDS, *COLLEGE CURRICULUM, COLLEGE INSTRUCTION, *COLLEGE STUDENTS, *FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION, INSTRUCTIONAL INNOVATION, *INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA, INSTRUCTIONAL TELEVISION, TEACHING PROCEDURES, *TELEVISED INSTRUCTION, VIDEO TAPE RECORDINGS

ABSTRACT

IN AN ATTEMPT TO MEET INCREASING STUDENT DEMANDS FOR FAMILY LIFE COURSES AT THE COLLEGE LEVEL, ONE UNIVERSITY HAS EXPERIMENTED WITH AND LEARNED MUCH FROM THE USE OF RECORDED TELEVISION TAPES AS AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION. TELEVISED CLASSES ARE A UNIQUE MEDIUM UNLIKE LECTURE, SEMINAR, OR TEXTBOOKS; BOTH INSTRUCTORS AND STUDENTS MUST LEARN HOW TO USE THEM IN ORDER TO CAPITALIZE ON THEIR ADVANTAGES AND AVOID THEIR DISADVANTAGES. AUXILIARY MATERIALS, EXCITING AND VARIED FORMATS, AND CONSISTENT REVISION HELP PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY CONTENT TO WIDE AND SCATTERED STUDENT AUDIENCES AT A VARIETY OF HOURS. (AUTHOR)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED035905

THE USE AND PRODUCTION OF TELEVISION TAPES FOR COURSES IN FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION*

John Rich, M.D., Ph.D.** and Eleanore Braun Luckey, Ph.D.***

* This paper was reported in part at the NCFR Annual Meeting, Washington, D. C., 1969.

** Research associate, Dept. of Forensic Psychiatry, McGill University and Consultant Radio-TV Center, University of Connecticut.

***Prof. and Head, Department of Child Development and Family Relations, University of Connecticut.

CG004876

Abstract

In an attempt to meet increasing student demands for family life courses at the college level, one university has experimented with and learned much from the use of recorded television tapes as an innovative approach to effective instruction. Televised classes are a unique medium unlike lecture, seminar, or textbooks; both instructors and students must learn how to use them in order to capitalize on their advantages and avoid their disadvantages. Auxiliary materials, exciting and varied formats, and consistent revision help provide high quality content to wide and scattered student audiences at a variety of hours.

THE USE AND PRODUCTION OF TELEVISION TAPES FOR COURSES IN FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

Students are arriving at the university these days knowing how important the role of the family is in the over-all development of individual personality. They are concerned with developing more self understanding themselves; they want to establish better human relationships and learn how to make better decisions regarding courtship, sex, and marriage. At the same time university populations have expanded and more students than ever before are being admitted to institutions of higher learning. These factors have converged on the family life educator and have resulted in an unprecedented demand for courses in the area of the Family. Course sections that only three years ago enrolled thirty students are this year being requested by a hundred and thirty. Generally the staffs of departments have not been able to grow quickly enough to meet the demand for the small, intimate, face-to-face teaching arrangements that most educators believe would be desirable (Luckey and Neubeck, 1956). As class size has expanded, student-instructor contact has diminished; lectures and readings have become a greater part of the class activity; and many of us have despaired that much of that which was most valuable in the teaching of a course in interpersonal relationships was being lost.

In an effort to accommodate a greater number of students and to maintain as much of the best instructional methods as

was possible, our department has undertaken an experimental televised course combined with small discussion groups. Two days a week students meet in a large section and receive a taped presentation by closed-circuit television. The presentation runs between twenty-five and thirty minutes and the remainder of the fifty-minute period is used by a lecturer or discussant. During the third period of the weekly sessions a group of ten to twelve students discuss the material with their instructor. Ideally, the small discussion groups would immediately follow the televised presentation, but our staff cannot provide the twenty or so discussion leaders that would be needed simultaneously in a course where the enrollment is two hundred or more students. Ideally, too, students would not have to come together in one room to receive the televised program. It could be received in a wide variety of locales--lounges, living quarters, classrooms, and at a variety of times--morning, afternoon, and evening. Eventually, perhaps these things will come about; currently that which is practical must precede that which is ideal.

In addition to receiving the televised program in the one large campus classroom, it is also received by four branches of the university in other parts of the state. Each of these classrooms has an instructor present to serve as lecturer or as discussant.

Televised programs have much to offer toward a solution of the dilemma of classes that are too large for the pre-

sentation of course materials that are personal and functional. But they are no substitute for a good teacher; they are no substitute for the good text--or even the good film. Instructors need not fear being "replaced" any more than the medieval teachers who felt threatened by printed books when they were first introduced to the classroom. Television like any other teaching tool has its unique contribution to make and can make it only as we learn both its limits and its potentials. Books, lectures, seminars, films, videotapes--each have advantages and disadvantages. Any teaching program that is to include these various methods must be based on the proper understanding of the most suitable technique and medium for each type of material.

Beyond the use of television tapes is the complicated procedure of producing them. Not many of us write our own textbooks, but if we are to use television, most of us are going to have to design and produce our own tapes. Troublesome as this is, the payoff may be well worth it.

Points to Consider

Each form of presentation has its own rules; speech that is meant to be listened to is put together differently from an essay that is meant to be read--this is very evident where the speaker reads an essay aloud. Similarly, material that is to be presented visually, or words that are to accompany a visual presentation, have to follow their own rules. This is recognized all too seldom by academics, who believe that "educational television" consists of making a videotape

of a lecture. A lecture that will hold a class in rapt attention for an hour will almost always become boring after five or ten minutes on the screen. Teachers who are brilliant in the lecture hall may appear fussy, pompous or coy. There are ways to minimize these disadvantages--changes of angle and distance by the cameraman, for example. But these techniques are only palliative, a TV presentation that is to be more than just adequate must be written for television.

Factors that must be kept in mind regarding videotapes include:

1. Students have been watching commercial TV since childhood, and expect the same technical competence and slickness in a home-grown presentation; this is seldom possible. What is more, they often expect to be entertained and approach the TV screen with an attitude quite different from the one they bring to a lecture. The difference should be made clear before they see the presentations, not explained after they have complained, for then it sounds defensive or apologetic.
2. Students may protest the lack of personal contact in TV teaching, yet few make the same complaint when using a textbook or when a lecturer is present even though few of them ask questions in a lecture room filled with three hundred other students. Some means of compensating for the lack of personalization, however, is a good thing. Small group

discussion and the availability of the instructor for individual appointments is important.

3. Tapes tend to become dated; once a tape has been made at considerable time and expense it is very tempting to go on using it. However, with some additional effort and modest editing facilities, up-to-date material can be substituted.
4. The speed of presentation cannot be altered to suit individual classes, let alone individual students. A textbook can, on the other hand, be taken at any speed that the individual chooses; and the lecturer, even when facing an enormous class, can be sufficiently aware of its reaction to adapt to some extent. Study guides help a great deal to overcome this disadvantage.
5. Technical requirements often mean that scheduling has to be more rigid for TV than for a lecture or seminar.
6. On the other hand, a teacher can spend many more hours in preparing a videotape than he can afford for a lecture, because once he has produced the tape, he does not have to spend time on repeating the same material.
7. There is almost no limit to the number of students who can see the same presentations: if one lecture hall is not large enough one simply provides more monitors in other places.
8. It is easy, if equipment and technical staff are available, to present a program repeatedly, per-

haps continuously from 8 a.m. until midnight. This means the students can "attend" when, in fact, their attention is at its best. They can also watch a program several times if they wish. A variation on this is to present the current lesson, then the previous one, then the one before that, then the current one again, and so on. By far the best way of doing this is to have individual receivers in small carrels throughout the building or the campus. This, however, is a luxury few institutions afford.

9. It is trite to say that one picture is worth a thousand words, but nonetheless true. There is probably no subject in the curriculum that cannot be presented more effectively by visual material in the right place. Movement, especially, is best shown and not merely described. This is well recognized by any teacher who uses films, but if he uses videotape recordings he is able not only to show films, but to make them. An interview or demonstration can be presented as if it were only a few feet away from each student in the class, no matter how many there are.

10. Exciting formats such as panels made up of faculty, or students, or both can be captured and preserved on tape that could not be presented live in the classroom. The class does not have

to wait while a "live" panel settles into chairs and fiddles with the microphones, nor does it have to suffer through a warming up period. If there is a dull or repetitive patch, it can be edited out of the tape; in fact, if the discussion does not go well, it need never be used at all. On the other hand, if the discussion reaches a high level, it is captured for all time.

11. In the same way, visiting lecturers, or other celebrities can be recorded. The dullest of celebrities usually says <u>something</u> worth keeping, and this can be incorporated into a program. As videotape, like audiotape, can be used over and over again (unlike the movie film) all such lectures can be taped as a routine, and "wiped" partly or wholly if they are of no use in subsequent teaching.

12. Another piece of local creativity is the use of the hand-held battery-operated TV camera. Interviews by students of other students, of faculty, of townspeople, for example, can add pointed illustration to Sociology or Psychology courses. This "roving reporter" approach on the <u>local</u> scene has an immediacy that is not matched by any film (however technically competent) that was made two years ago in another state.

13. It is evident by now that a course using TV is not static. It is constantly refreshed, replenished, edited, and cut. After a year or two, a teacher will have at his disposal a lot more footage than he can use, and can pick and choose from the department's own tape "library" just as he can now select a film made elsewhere. What is more, it is there, it does not have to be ordered weeks in advance, and with a cooperative technician, it is as easy to preview as a film.

Making the Tape

Both the planning and the taping of a presentation is usually a new experience for the academician who has been taught by, and is used to teaching by, the more traditional methods.

If an instructor is unfamiliar with ETV there is something to be said for going slowly. By making a single recording, or a few at the most, he can try out the medium and make judgments on the results. If he is going into TV in a big way, however, he must first redesign the whole curriculum. Trying to reproduce other forms of teaching, or to graft VTR's onto an existing format, insures that both types of presentation will suffer. Decisions must be made regarding which is the best medium for the presentation of each type of material: which is best learned from a book, from lecture,or seminar, from film, or from videotape?

When those facts of the curriculum that are best suited to TV have been selected, the instructor must devise a means of presenting these on TV. This is very different from the way the same material may be presented in a book or in a lecture. Unless the academic is already experienced in TV or film production, this is where he needs the help of an expert. An enormous amount of talent can be wasted and ill feeling caused, at this point, if the two experts--one an expert in teaching, the other an expert in TV production--refuse to recognize each other's superior knowledge.

It is the instructor's responsibility, of course, to decide on the content of the course and the level at which it is to be presented. He will usually want to consult with the producer on these points in the very early stages of planning. If the producer has some knowledge of the subject matter, he will be able to suggest ways in which the medium can be used. He may have to take a stance and refuse to be browbeaten by an academic who has "been teaching the subject for years".

An important part of the strategic planning consists of deciding the way in which the TV programs are to fit in with other teaching. For example, they may consist of simple presentation of facts, or they may be deliberately provocative as a prelude to discussion. Although they sometimes may be complete in themselves, generally they are best accompanied by study guides that propose questions for discussion, provide references to reading material, and may repeat tables or graphs that are difficult to take down from the

brief presentation on a screen. Often they may be used to make textbook material more graphic and meaningful. For example, in contrasting courtship patterns of different periods or different countries, it is far more dramatic to interview people of different ages and backgrounds and to hear them describe their own experiences than it is to read about them. Such an interview can be excellent theater (and therefore excellent teaching) but it often is insufficient and incomplete. The facts and the statistics must still be presented and the textbook or lecture does this best.

After the planning comes the casting and this can be a serious problem. Some teachers may be excellent on TV but are difficult to get into the studio for the taping. Others may be terrible on TV but sulk for weeks if they are not asked to appear. It must be made clear to everybody concerned that just as competence in research does not necessarily imply competence in teaching, or vice versa, so an excellent reputation in a lecture room does not necessarily lead even to adequacy in a studio. The views of the producer should be respected here, for he is less likely to be influenced by the halo effect of a high academic distinction.

Even the born TV teacher, however, must still learn the craft. Habits that are completely unimportant on a podium can ruin a TV presentation; rocking backwards and forwards, turning from side to side, partly covering one's face with a hand--all may force the camera crew and director to change angles, shots, or positions in attempts to keep the speaker "on camera". There are many things that must be

learned in making a TV presentation but probably the most essential is to remember that the performer is in effect speaking to one person, a student, who is a few feet away! This is an art not easy to develop.

There are also technical skills to be learned that are specific on TV; one of these is the ability to "come in", and "go out" on cue. The producer will be able to adapt, to some extent, to the speaker who stops long before he is supposed to, goes on after he is supposed to stop, or changes his "script" beyond recognition, so that nobody else knows what is coming next. Even so, the teacher who recognizes that he has to learn new techniques, and then sets out to learn them, makes life a lot easier for the technicians.

Some Cautions

There are usually some special production situations that need to be given consideration. The producer can usually give the necessary guidance. When films or any other previously published materials are to be used on television, copywright infringements must be checked. The rules are complicated and vary with closed-circuit TV and with microwave links.

When music is to be used, you may need some artistic guidance. A good, bouncy theme--and it probably should be--draws the class's attention to the fact that the program is about to begin; and, if students have enjoyed previous presentations, it will put them into a receptive frame of mind... as every commercial TV series illustrates!

It is wise not to shoot the first program first; as an "expert" one gets better with time, and if the better tapes are presented early in the course, the students will forgive a few mediocre ones later. However, if the first tapes are mediocre, students will tend to "turn off" the rest no matter how good they are.

Some provision should be made for feedback from the students on the effectiveness of the tapes. If a critic sheet is used, tapes should be evaluated soon after they are presented. It is not possible to get accurate judgments on individual tapes if one waits until the end of the semester. One should take into consideration a certain amount of the undergraduates' determined cynicism; it is not enough merely to present good programs; students, just as professors, must learn how to use ETV. They need aids, direction, and patience!

Conclusion

With the number of students increasing in colleges and universities and more and more demands being made for courses in the field of family life education, TV taping and presentation offers an experimental and innovative approach to effective instruction. Like lectures, seminars, textbooks, and films, videotape is a unique medium that has a specific contribution to make to instruction, and like these, it has both its advantages and its disadvantages. Probably the chief difficulty is in learning how to use tapes--which are different from all the other teaching methods--in a way that will minimize their deficiencies and maximize their excellencies.

Beyond learning how to make use of the tapes in the classroom is the need to design and produce them so that they carry the main theme of the curriculum. They do not stand alone but are to be used in conjunction with an effective classroom instructor who is available regularly for discussion with small groups of students; with a good textbook, auxiliary films and teaching guides that carry topics for further exploration and bibliographical materials.

Television is a tool that can do some things better than any other teaching techniques, but only if it is used with proper understanding of just what it can and cannot do.

References

Luckey, Eleanore and Neubeck, Gerhard. What Are We Doing in Marriage Education? Marriage and Family Living, 1956, XVIII, 4, 349-354.